

**Testimony before the Appropriations Committee**

**DMHAS Budget Hearing**

**H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

**February 23, 2017**

**Testimony from Henry Davis**

**Good morning, Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:**

**My name is Henry Davis. I'm a Recovery Specialist at the Chrysalis Center Inc. in Hartford CT. I've worked in Human Services for over 23 years and have had the opportunity to work with some very special people. In addition to my work, I have personally been touched by members of my immediate family who have struggled with mental illness. My father was recently diagnosed with dementia with lewy bodies. Even with all my experience, it is still extremely painful to watch him struggle to do things that I regularly take for granted. Even with my education and knowledge that I have been given over the years, I still feel powerless- and I can only imagine how he feels. I have spent over 20 years trying to help people with these challenges to connect the dots between mental health and the issues related to services they need in order to feel like a part of the society that often isolates and ostracizes them. I came into this field because I know that the line between hope and despair is thin and it only requires people who care and a government that is prepared to provide the resources needed to help those in need. Everyone deserves a chance to live independently and self-sufficiently. I've seen people who were given the chance to become independent and they have gone on to succeed. I want to continue to help people make those connections. In order for me and my colleagues to do this, we need your help. If these resources that we utilize to help our people with mental illness are reduced- our people will**

then lose the hope, independence and opportunities that give them the dignity and self-respect that they need to live successful lives.

I'm here testifying on behalf of the many individuals that I have assisted in the past, the ones I am currently assisting and those who will need assistance in the future. I don't envy the choices you will have to make and who or what should receive funding and support. I cannot imagine the challenges that you all face in trying to make the decisions that will impact the lives of so many. I don't want to have to look anyone in the face and tell them that there are no resources to help them- no resources for housing, no resources to help them become gainfully employed, no resources to help them fight their addictions.

Today it's tough trying to meet the needs of the communities that myself and my colleagues serve. To reduce the access to resources is to increase trauma, shelters, institutions, penitentiaries, and cemeteries. Personal disclosure: I also suffer from mental illness. Because of what I know; I just want to continue to be able to help people who do not have the stability and support network that I currently have.

I understand that the Governor has to balance the budget, but if it's done at the expense of the individuals who use Chrysalis, the North Regional Mental Health Board, CT legal rights, and other non- profits; the impact will be much greater than the current fiscal crisis.

Thank you for your time and service-

Henry Davis.